

An Evening at Alfie's

Shirley Hughes



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Other Picture Books by

SHIRLEY HUGHES

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Alfie Gets in First

Alfie Gives a Hand

Dogger

(Winner of the 1977 Kate Greenaway Medal)

Helpers

(Highly commended for the 1975 Kate Greenaway Medal and winner of the 1976 Other Award)

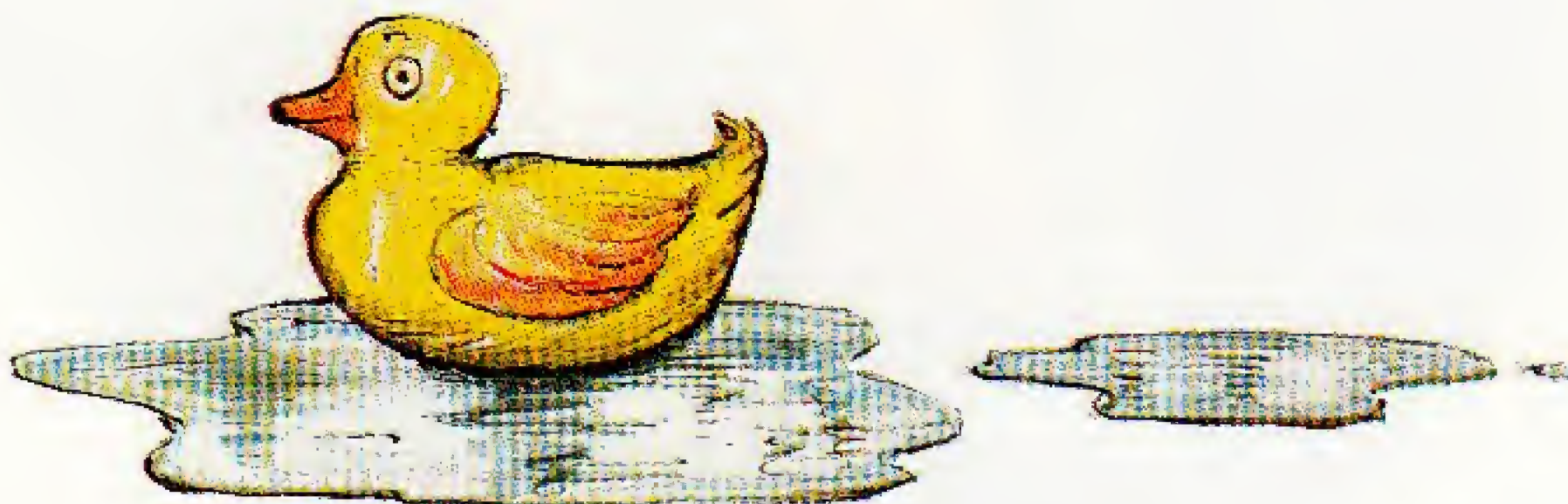
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Up and Up

For Dorothy Edwards



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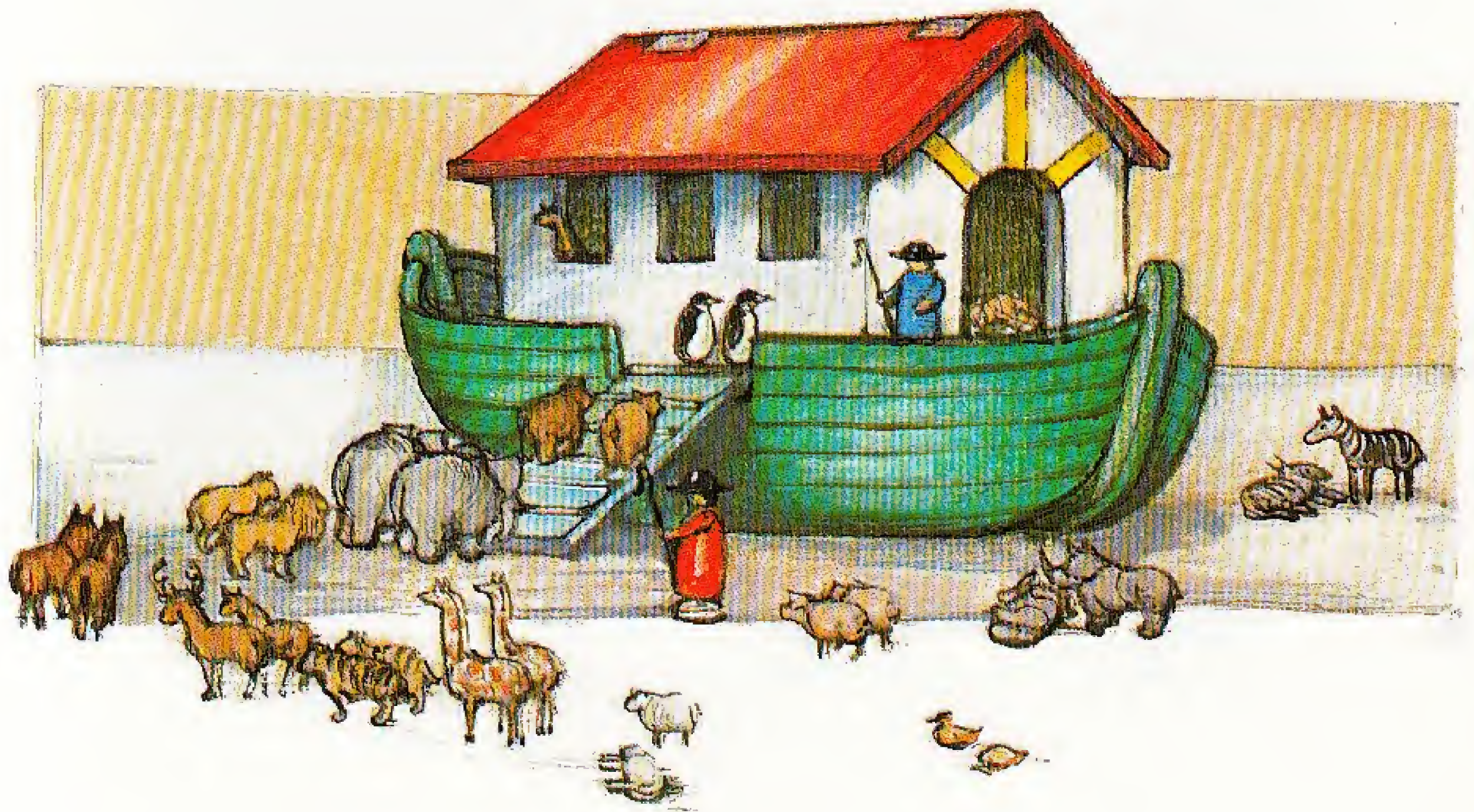
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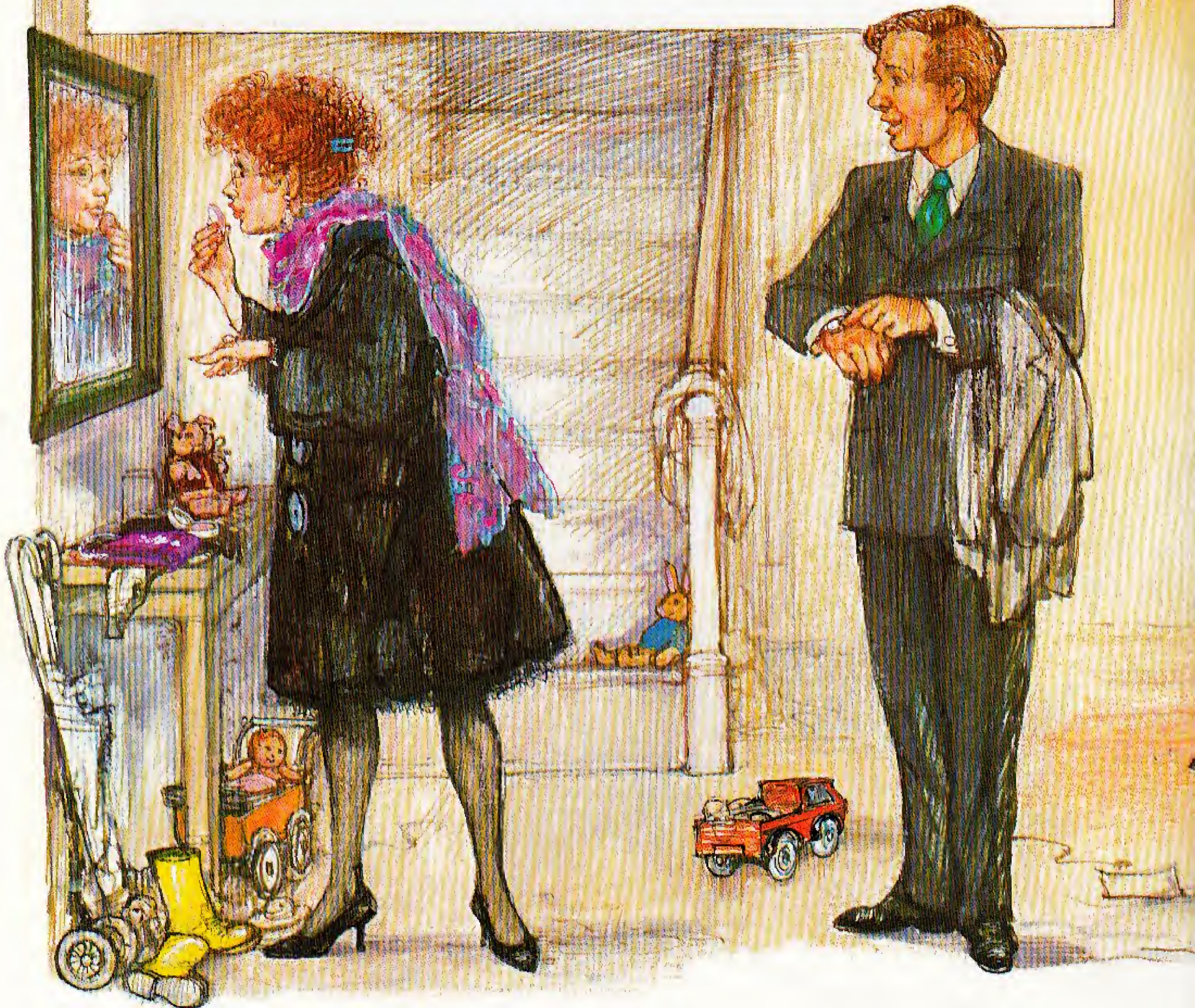


One cold, winter evening . . .



Alfie and his little sister, Annie Rose, were
all ready for bed,

Mum and Dad were all ready to go out,



and Mrs MacNally's Maureen was in the living-room.
She had come to look after Alfie and Annie Rose
while Mum and Dad went to a party.



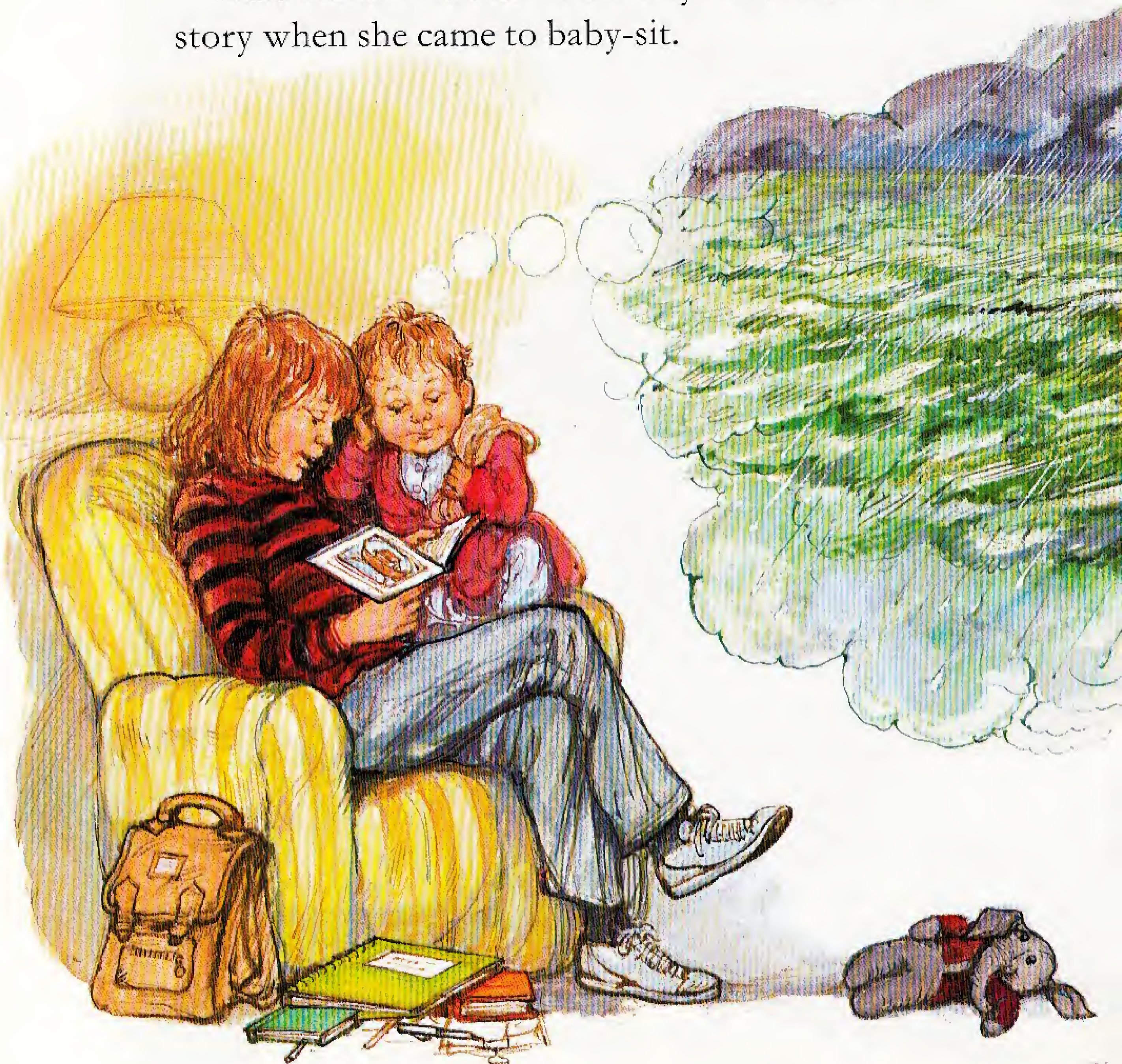


Alfie and Maureen waved good-bye to them from the window.

Annie Rose was already in her cot. Soon she settled down and went to sleep.



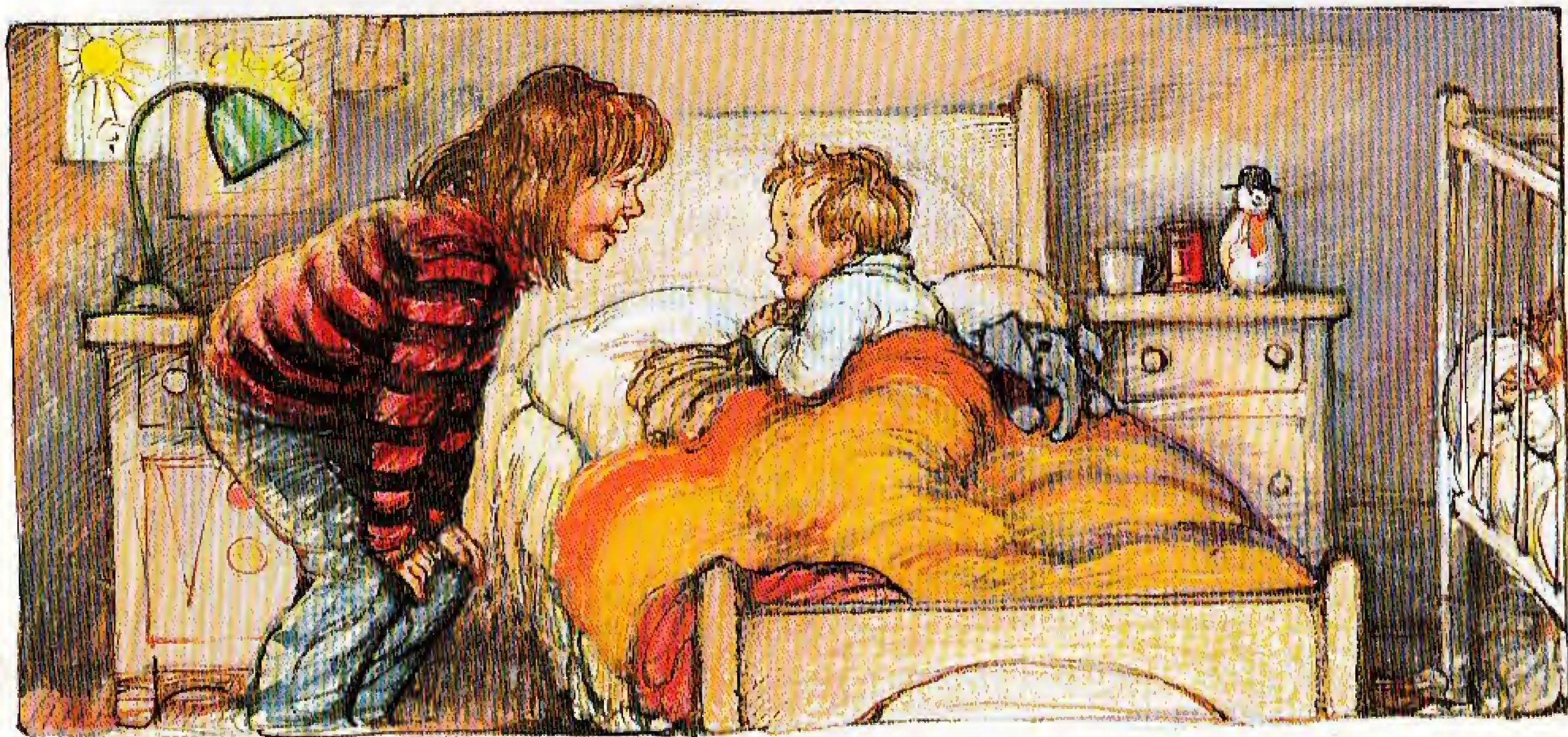
Alfie liked Maureen. She always read him a story when she came to baby-sit.



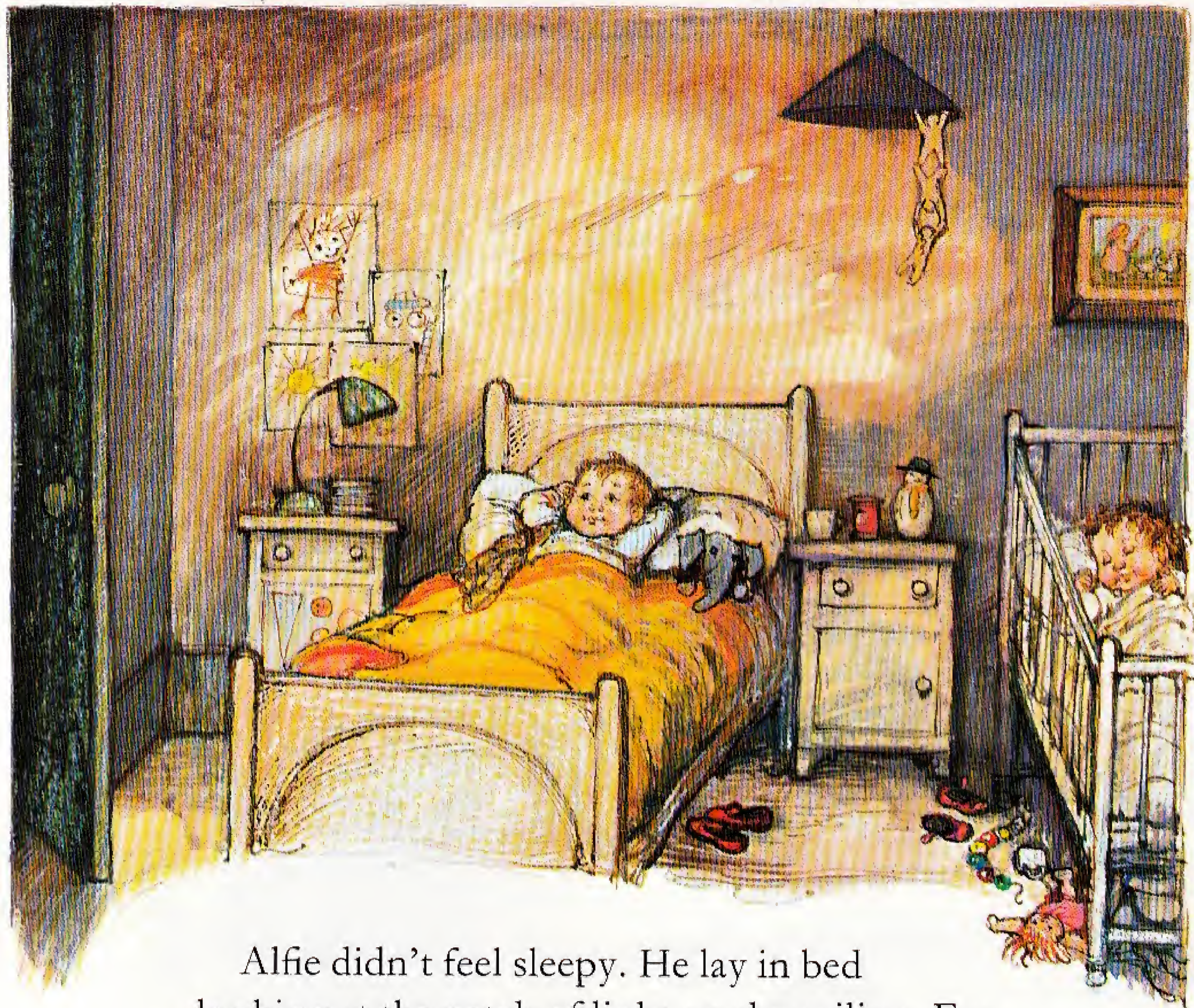


Tonight Alfie wanted the story about Noah and his Ark full of animals. Alfie liked to hear how the rain came drip, drip, drip, and then splash! splash! splash! and then rushing everywhere, until the whole world was covered with water.

When Maureen had finished the story it was time for Alfie to go to bed. She came upstairs to tuck him up. They had to be very quiet and talk in whispers in case they woke up Annie Rose.



Maureen gave Alfie a good-night hug and went off downstairs, leaving the door a little bit open.



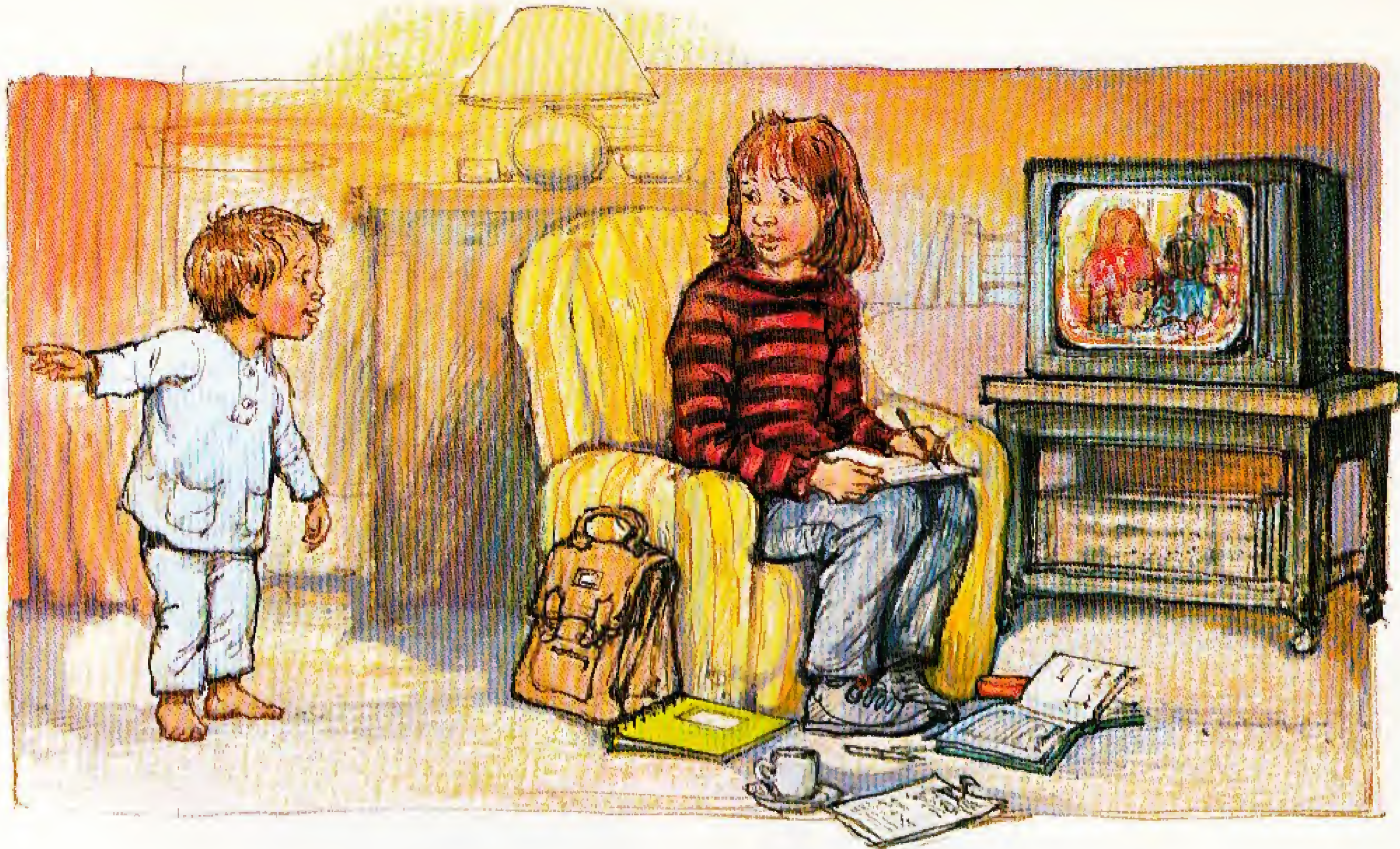
Alfie didn't feel sleepy. He lay in bed looking at the patch of light on the ceiling. For a long time all was quiet. Then he heard a funny noise outside on the landing.



Alfie sat up. The noise was just outside his door. Drip, drip, drip! Soon it got quicker. It changed to drip-drip, drip-drip, drip-drip! It was getting louder too.

Alfie got out of bed and peeped round the door. There was a puddle on the floor. He looked up. Water was splashing into the puddle from the ceiling, drip-drip, drip-drip, drip-drip! It was raining inside the house!





Alfie went downstairs. Maureen was doing her homework in front of the television.

“It’s raining on the landing,” Alfie told her.

Alfie and Maureen went back upstairs. The puddle was getting bigger. The drip-drip, drip-drip, drip-drip had turned into a splash! splash! splash!





“Hmm, looks like a burst pipe,” said Maureen. A plumber was one of the things she wanted to be when she left school.

“Better get a bucket,” she said. So Alfie showed her where the bucket was kept, in the kitchen cupboard with the brushes and brooms.





But now the water was dripping down in another place. Alfie and Maureen found two of Mum's big mixing bowls and put them underneath the drips.

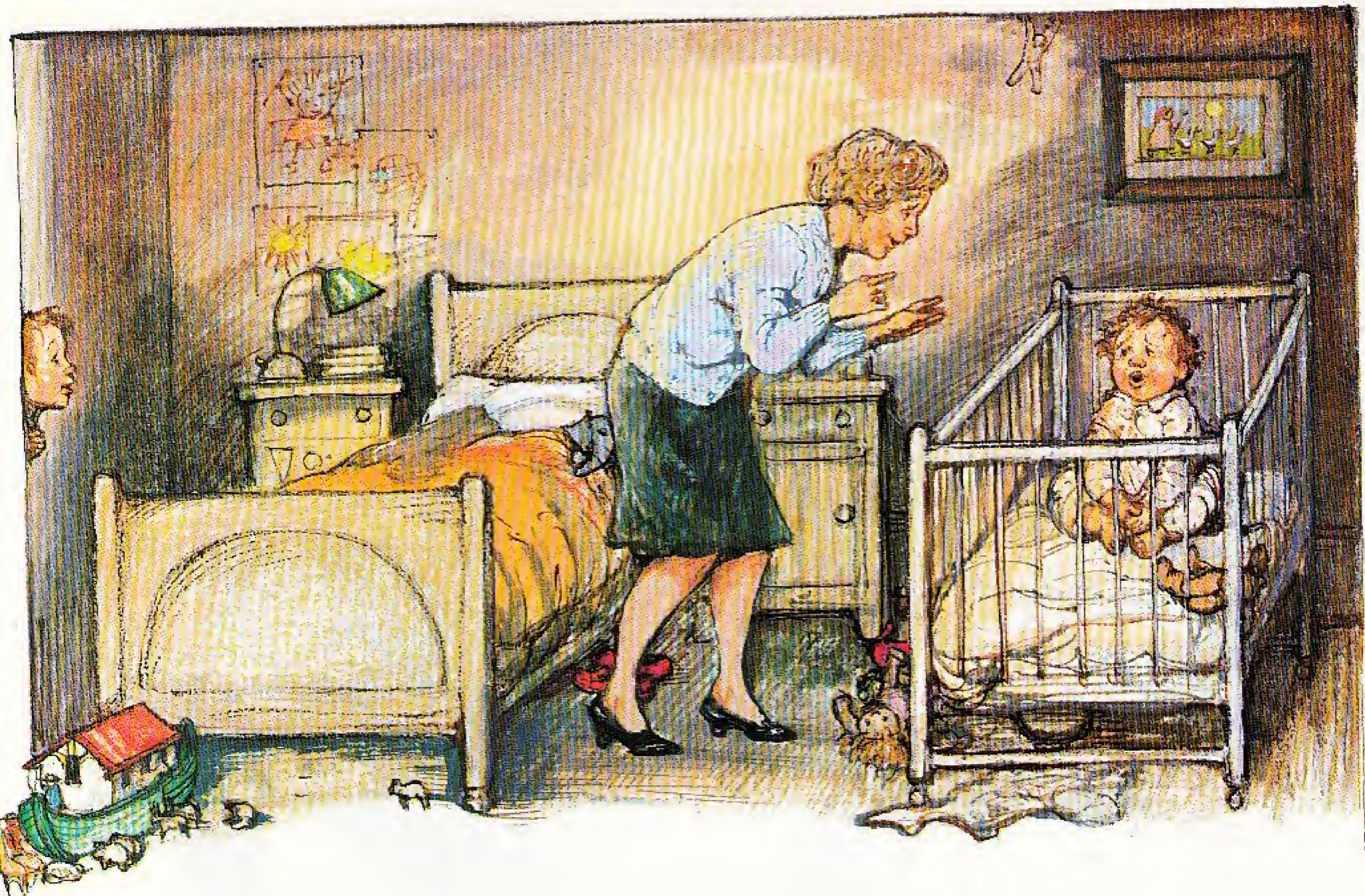




Maureen got on the telephone to her Mum. The MacNallys lived just across the street. Mrs MacNally was there in a moment.

“Oh dear, oh dear, it’s ruining your mother’s floor!” cried Mrs MacNally. “Fetch some floor-cloths, Maureen!”

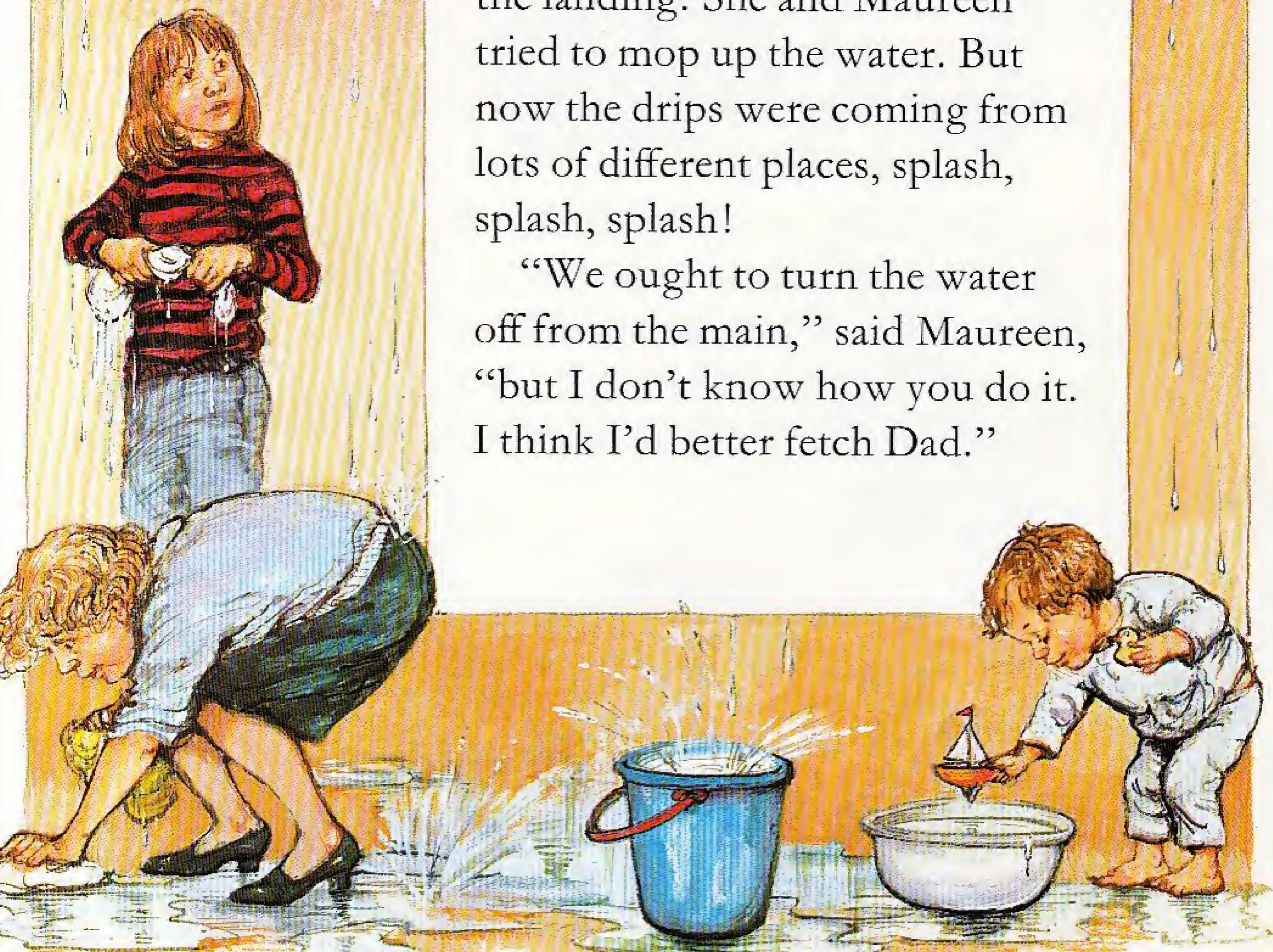




Just then Annie Rose woke up and began to cry.
“Shh, shh, there, there,” said Mrs MacNally,
bending over her cot. But Annie Rose
only looked at her and cried louder.

Mrs MacNally ran back out to the landing. She and Maureen tried to mop up the water. But now the drips were coming from lots of different places, splash, splash, splash!

“We ought to turn the water off from the main,” said Maureen, “but I don’t know how you do it. I think I’d better fetch Dad.”





While she was gone Mrs MacNally mopped and mopped, and emptied brimming bowls, and in between mopping and emptying she ran to try to comfort Annie Rose. But Annie Rose went on crying and crying. The drips on the landing came faster and faster.



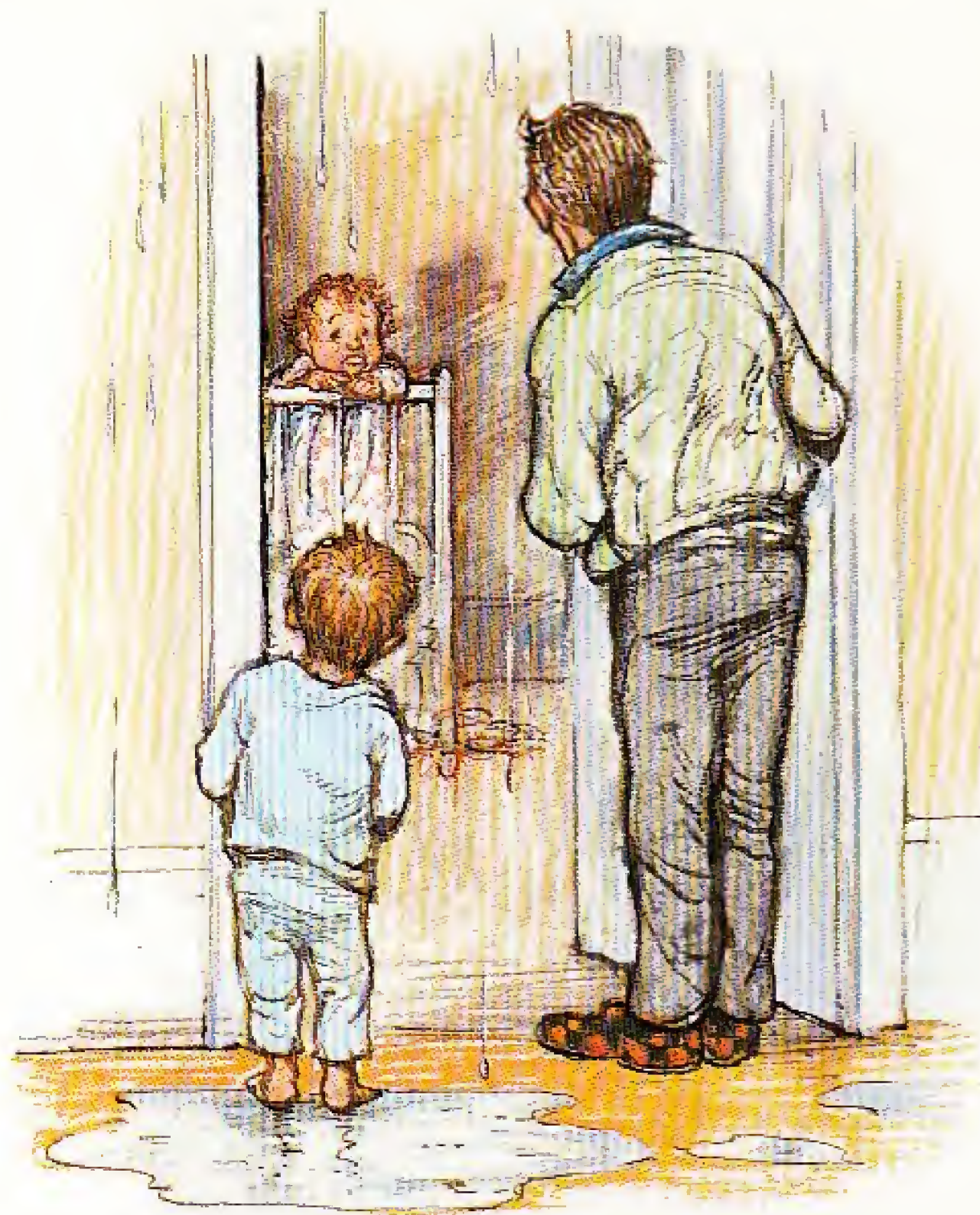
Now there were a lot of puddles on the floor. Alfie paddled in them for a while. It was quite fun but the water was very cold. He thought that soon perhaps the whole street would be covered with water and they would all have to float away in a boat, like Noah's Ark.





Soon Maureen came running upstairs with Mr MacNally close behind her, wearing his bedroom slippers.

“What’s all this, then?” said Mr MacNally, looking at all the water pouring down.

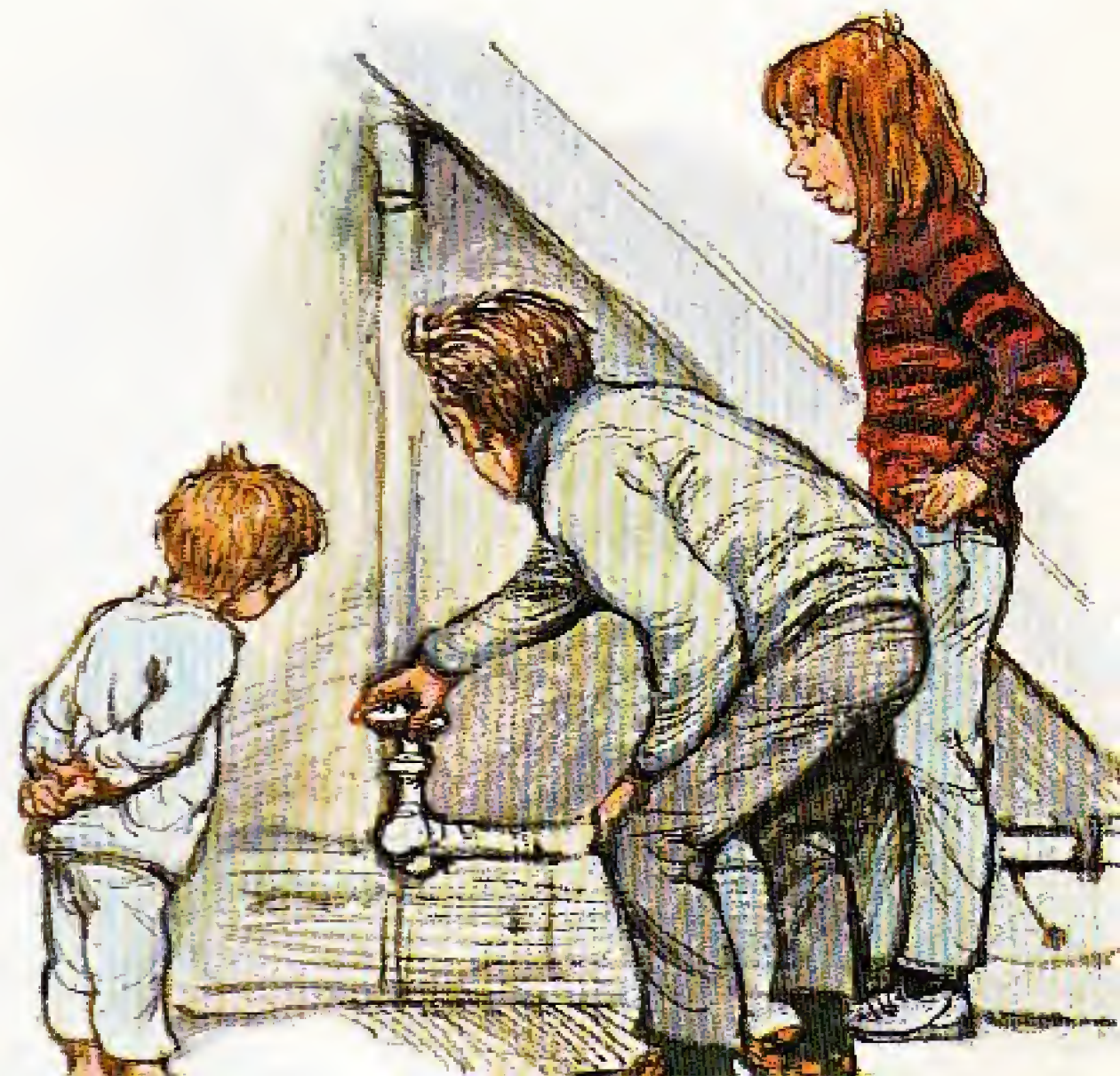


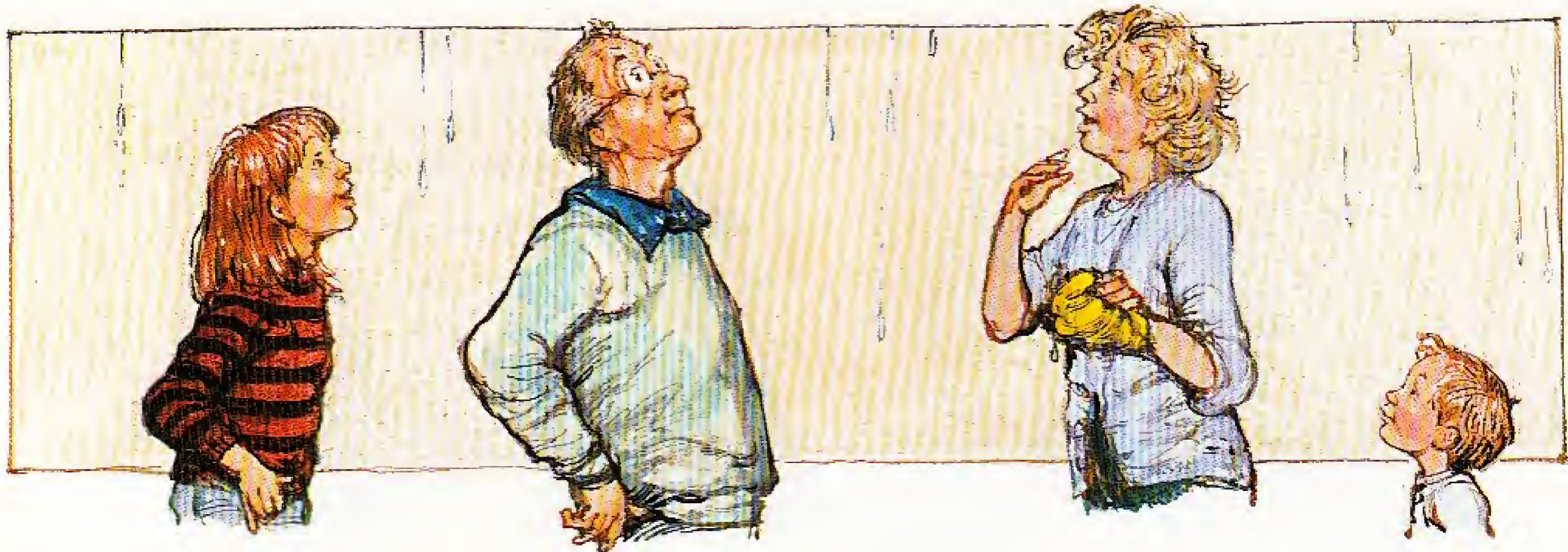
He put his head round the bedroom door. He and Annie Rose were old friends.

“Dear, dear, what’s all this?” he said in a very kind voice.

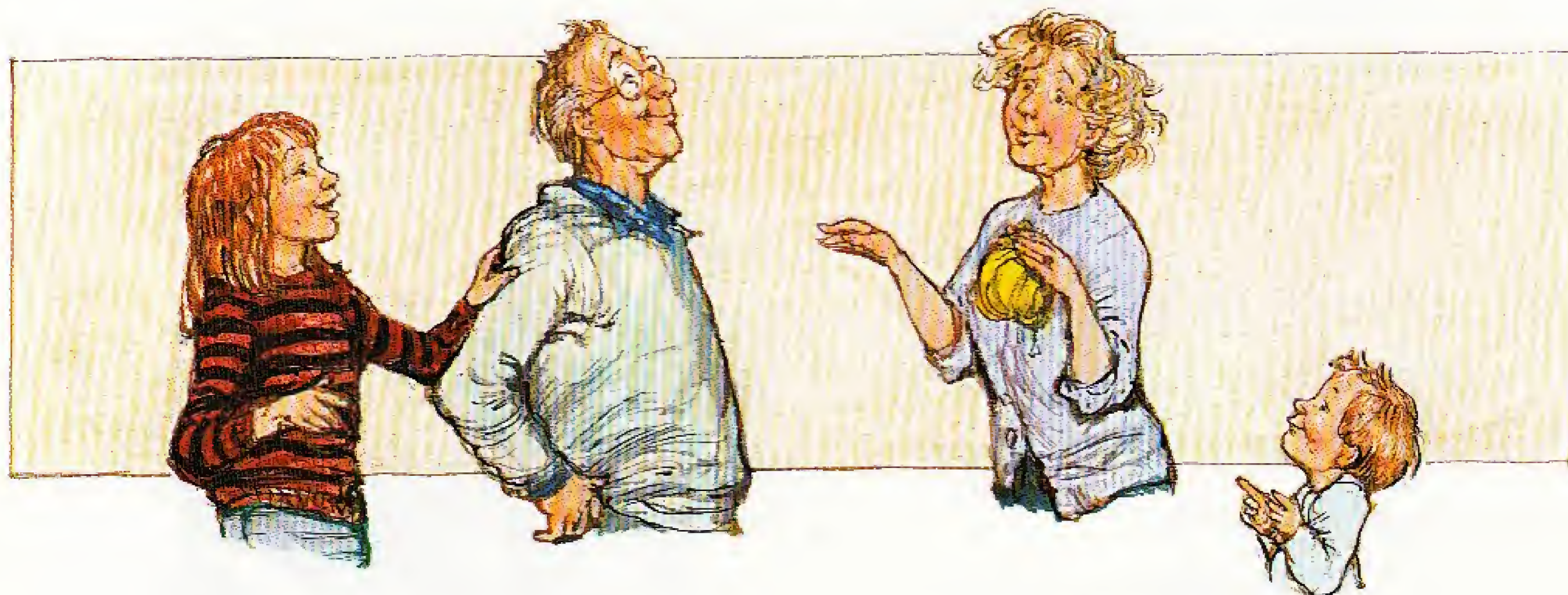
Then he went downstairs and found a large sort of tap under the stairs and turned it off, just like that.

“So *that’s* where it was,” said Maureen.





Then the water stopped pouring down
through the ceiling, splash! splash! splash! and
became a drip-drip, drip-drip, drip-drip,



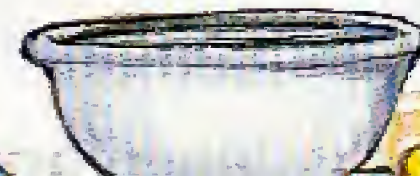
and then a drip. . . drip. . . . drip. drip.

“Oh, thank goodness for that!” said Mrs MacNally.

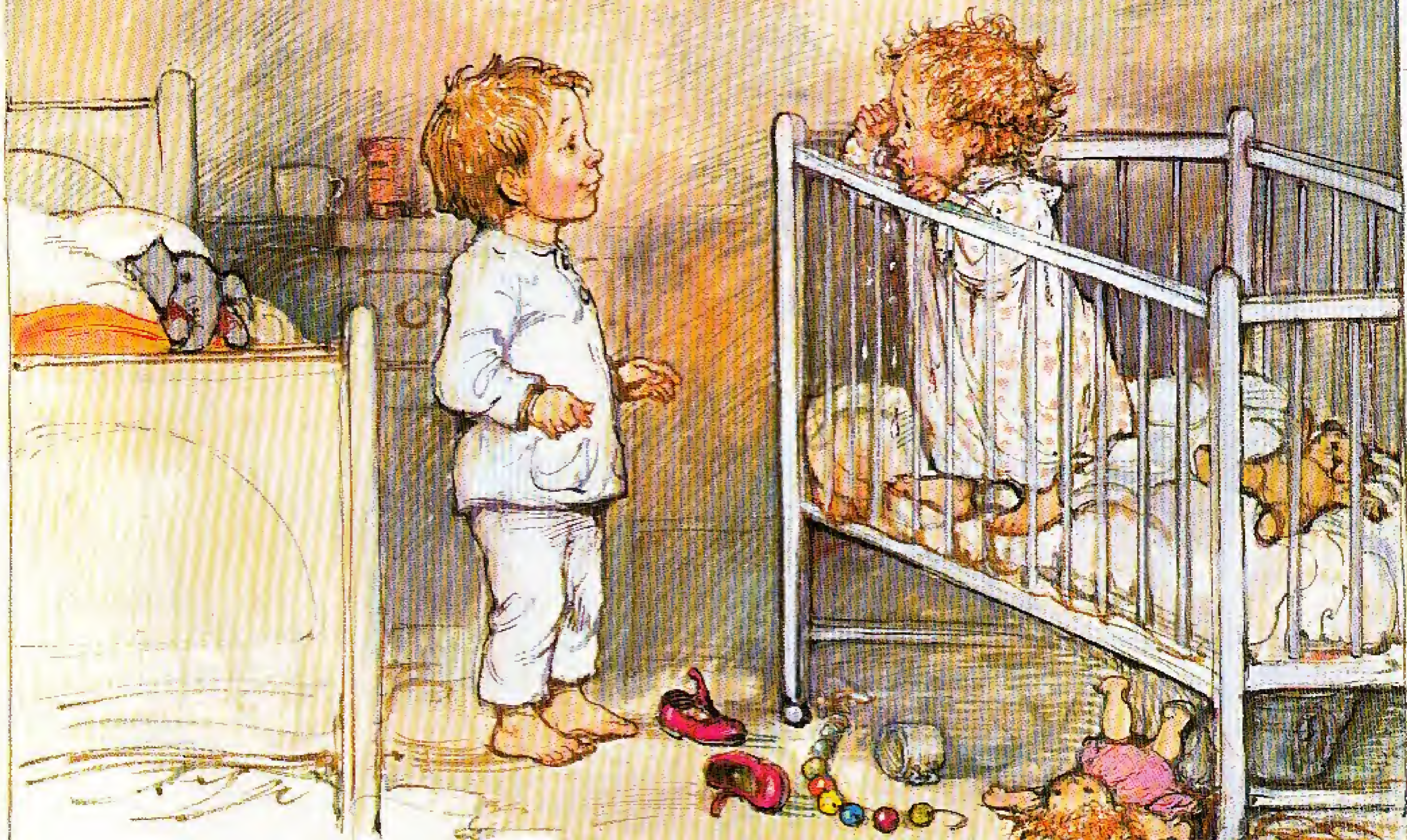


“I’ll know how to do it next time,” said Maureen.

But Annie Rose was still crying.



Alfie went into the bedroom to see if he could cheer her up. Tears were rolling down her cheeks and soaking into her blanket.





“Don’t cry, Annie Rose,” said Alfie. And he put his hand through the bars of her cot and patted her very gently, as he had seen Mum do sometimes.

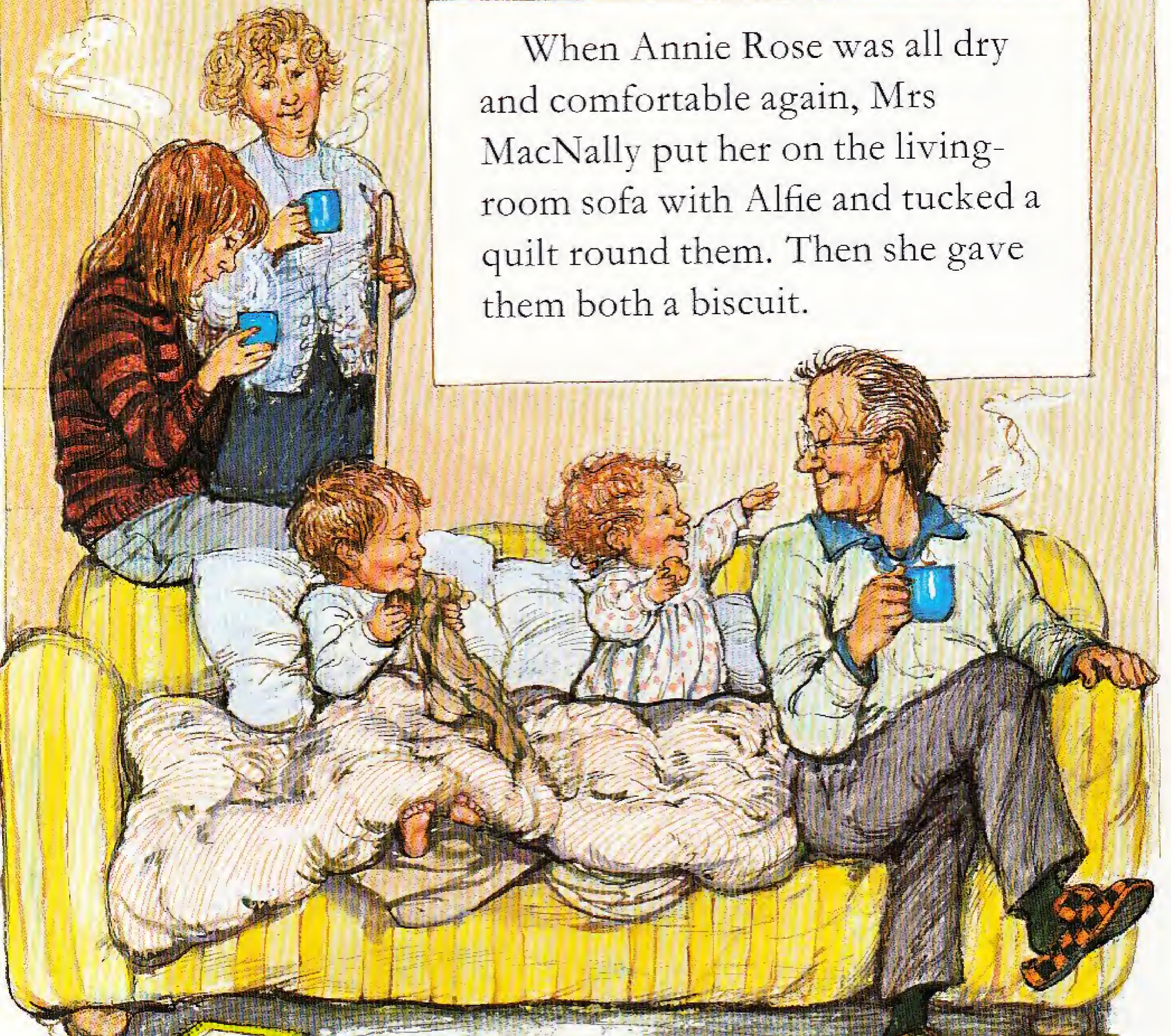
Annie Rose still wore nappies at night.

“Annie Rose is wet,” Alfie told everyone. “And her bed’s wet too. I expect that’s why she’s crying.”

“Why, so she is, poor little mite!” said Mrs MacNally.



When Annie Rose was all dry and comfortable again, Mrs MacNally put her on the living-room sofa with Alfie and tucked a quilt round them. Then she gave them both a biscuit.



Annie Rose was quite cheerful now. She got very friendly with Mr MacNally and he let her play a game with him, taking off his glasses and putting them on again. Then she sucked her thumb and leaned up against Alfie, and Alfie leaned up against her. When Mum and Dad came home, they were both fast asleep.



Next morning Mum told Alfie not to turn on the taps until the plumber had been to mend the burst pipe.

Alfie didn't mind not having a wash. He'd had enough water the evening before to last for a long time.



One cold, winter evening Mum and Dad go out to a party, leaving Mrs McNally's Maureen from across the road to look after Alfie and his baby sister, Annie Rose. When disaster strikes in the form of a burst water pipe, Alfie displays great resourcefulness not only in helping Maureen and her parents halt the flood, but also in coping with Annie Rose, who has been having some waterwork problems of her own!

Also available in this series:

Alfie's Feet

Alfie Gets in First

Alfie Gives a Hand

The Big Alfie and Annie Rose

Storybook

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